

## Frank Yiannas

**Prior Deputy Commissioner for Food at U.S. FDA, Food Safety Executive for Global Brands, Past President of the International Association for Food Protection, Author, Adjunct Professor, Food System Futurist, and Advocate for Consumers**



### Positions, Employment, and Achievements

#### **November 2018 – February 2023, Deputy Commissioner, Food Policy & Response, U.S. FDA**

- Led the execution of all food safety-related policies, including implementation of the landmark FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). His leadership role within the Agency covered a broad spectrum of food safety priorities, such as outbreak response, traceback investigations, product recall activities, and supply chain innovation across the full spectrum of FDA-regulated food products (which accounts for about 80% of all foods). Frank also represented the FDA on all human food safety-related matters in dealings with Congress, foreign governments, and international organizations. Lastly, he served as the Agency's main spokesperson with the media on significant issues involving FDA-regulated food products.

#### Significant Accomplishments:

- Architect of the [US FDA's New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint](#), which outlines the work the agency will undertake during the next 10 years to create a more digital, traceable, and safer food system.
- Led the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's food response to the COVID-19 pandemic and served on the White House Task Force, in collaboration with groups such as U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to minimize U.S. food supply chain disruptions throughout the pandemic.
- Finalized a formal agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that memorialized how the two agencies will jointly oversee the production of human food products derived from the cells of livestock and poultry (i.e. cell cultured meat and poultry).
- Led the development of the most significant and advanced food traceability regulation anywhere in the world, the **U.S. Food Traceability Rule**, proposed in September 2020 on behalf of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. The final rule compliance date is January 2026.
- Pioneered and completed a proof-of-concept that demonstrates that by leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for screening imported seafood shipments into the U.S., the FDA could increase its ability to detect violative shipments of public health concern by 300%. Based on these results, the US FDA is moving forward with operationalizing this functionality in the field.
- Coordinated and strengthened FDA's foodborne outbreak responses involving threats to human health on all foodborne outbreaks involving FDA regulated foods.

- Oversaw [FDA's Fresh Leafy Green STEC Action Plan](#) with an emphasis on a One Health approach to foodborne disease prevention and complex agricultural ecosystem challenges.
- Led the discussions and negotiations between the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and the National Service for Animal and Plant Health, Food Safety and Quality (SENASICA) in Mexico, one of our largest trading partners, to establish a Food Safety Collaborative Partnership (FSP) between our two countries, which formalizes how the two countries will work together on food safety issues.

#### **June 2008 – November 2018, Vice President, Food Safety & Health, Walmart, Bentonville, AR**

Oversaw food safety and other public health functions for the world's largest retailer, with over 200 million customers on a weekly basis. Responsibilities included food safety oversight of Walmart stores, Neighborhood Markets, and Sam's Clubs. This includes training and education of thousands of employees, hundreds of food suppliers and a number of regulatory compliance issues.

#### **Significant Accomplishments:**

- In 2008, Walmart became the first U.S. grocery chain to require suppliers to have their manufacturing facilities certified against the internationally recognized Global Food Safety Initiative standards;
- In 2010, Walmart launched one of the most advanced industry beef safety standards, credited with contributing to the reduction of beef recalls in the U.S. over the past several years.
- In 2014, Walmart announced an industry poultry safety requirement widely praised by USDA and CDC. It was the first industry standard to address Salmonella reduction among primary breeder stock as well as on chicken parts. This was significant because suppliers to Walmart supply over 80% of all chicken sold in the U.S., and the initiative was expected to reduce the prevalence of Salmonella and associated illnesses due to poultry in the U.S.
- Created a best-in-class recall system with register lock-down capabilities and automated customer notifications that is now the industry benchmark and emulated by others in the industry.
- Responsible for rolling out a handheld, real-time food safety inspectional tool, called the SPARK System, used by Store and Club operations to ensure food safety standards are being met.
- Required majority of U.S. suppliers of retail deli meats to reformulate their products to include an inhibitor that significantly reduces the growth of Listeria. This was significant because many of these suppliers supply greater than 80% of all deli meats sold in the U.S.
- Driver behind the creation of Walmart's Food Safety High Five, which leveraged International Food Safety Icons to facilitate communication of food safety principles and enhance understanding among food workers who do not speak English as their primary language.
- Created a Global Food Safety Management System, adopted by all markets, years in advance of the company creating a global compliance program.
- Led one of the largest proof-of-concepts in the world using blockchain technology to enhance traceability and food transparency. Based on this work, Walmart began to require all leafy green suppliers to enhance their traceability protocols to protect customers and minimize overly broad, unnecessary recalls.

**March 1989 – June 2008, Director, Safety and Health - Walt Disney World Company, Lake Buena Vista, FL**

Oversaw all safety issues (attraction, guest, occupational, and food safety) for a workforce of more than 55,000 as well as public health functions for one of the largest entertainment and hospitality complexes in the world. Served as food safety subject matter leader for all Disney Parks & Resorts worldwide and Disney Cruise ships.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Created a world-class food safety program from farm to fork ensuring the safety of tens of millions of visitors annually at Disney Parks, Resorts, and Cruise ships around the world.
- During his tenure, Disney received the Black Pearl Award for Corporate Excellence in Food Safety given by the International Association for Food Protection.
- Led the Safe D Begins with Me initiative that resulted in a reduction in Walt Disney World's OSHA Rate from 23.1 in FY04 to 6.98 in FY08 (a dramatic 70% reduction in 5 short years).
- Spearheaded, along with the Disney Imagineers, the development of the International Association for Food Protection's 'International Food Safety Icons,' now used by some of the world's leading brands, such as McDonald's, Chick fil-A, Starbucks, Chipotle, Disney, the Olympic Games, Walmart, and more.
- Led the adoption of information technology and handheld inspectional systems for food safety, including Disney's CHEF's and Café System at Disney.

**Other Experiences**

2006 – 2007     Chairman, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network  
2007             President, International Association for Food Protection  
2013 – 2014     Vice Chair, Global Food Safety Initiative  
2014 - Present   Adjunct Professor, Michigan State University

**Honors**

2001             Black Pearl Award for Corporate Excellence in Food Safety, International Association for Food Protection  
2005             Special Achievement Award, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network  
2007             Lifetime Achievement Award for Leadership in Food Safety, NSF International  
2008             Collaboration Award, United States Food & Drug Administration  
2010             Harold Barnum Industry Award, International Association for Food Protection  
2015             Fellow Award, International Association for Food Protection  
2015             Industry Professional Food Safety Hero, Safe Tables Our Priority Foodborne Illness  
2017             Outstanding Faculty Award, Michigan State University  
2020             Automated Identification Technology in Government Award by AIM  
2022             International Dairy Foods Association Leadership Award  
2023             USF College of Public Health Outstanding Alumni Award

## Select Videos

FDA Food & COVID-19 (2020) - [What You Need to Know: Food & COVID-19](#)

GS1 Connect (2020) - [Fireside Chat, Deputy Commissioner Yiannas & Bob Carpenter, at GS1 Connect](#)

Global Food Safety Initiative (2019) - [My Boss is the American Consumer](#)

Walmart Food Safety & Blockchain (2018) – [Trust Through Transparency](#)

Food Supply Chain Resilience (2022) - [FDA's 21 Forward Data Platform](#)

## Published Books

Yiannas, Frank. *Food Safety Culture: Creating a Behavior-based Food Safety Management System*. Springer Scientific, 2009.

Yiannas, Frank. *Food Safety = Behavior: 30 Proven Techniques to Enhance Employee Compliance*. Springer Scientific, 2015.

## Select Peer-reviewed Publications

Crandall, Phil; Van Loo, Ellen J.; O'Bryan, Corliss A.; Mauromoustakos, Andy; Yiannas, Frank; Dyenson, Natalie; & Berdnik, Irina (2012), *Companies' Opinions and Acceptance of Global Food Safety Initiative Benchmarks after Implementation*. *Journal of Food*. (9): 1660-72

Newsome, R., Balestrini, C. G., Baum, M. D., Corby, J., Fisher, W., Goodburn, K., Labuza, T. P., Prince, G., Thesmar, H. S. and Yiannas, F. (2014), *Applications and Perceptions of Date Labeling of Food*. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety*, 13: 745–769. doi: 10.1111/1541-4337.12086

Laura K. Strawn; Eric Brown, Jairus David, Henk den Bakker, Pajau Vangay, Frank Yiannas. and Martin Wiedmann<sup>4\*</sup> (2015), *Big Data in Food Safety and Quality – The Current State and Future Direction*. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety*. Feb: 42-50.

Philip G. Crandall, Corliss A. O'Bryan, Robin Peterson, Natalie Dyenson, and Frank Yiannas (2015), *A Survey Estimating the Benefits of Incorporating Listeria Specific Growth Inhibitors in Bulk Luncheon Meats to be sliced in Retail Delis*. *Food Control*. (53): 185-188.

Yiannas, Frank. (2018), *A New Era of Food Transparency Powered by Blockchain*. MIT Press, Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization. (Vol 12): 46-56

## Education/Degrees

August 2003 – Master of Public Health, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida

December 1987 – Bachelor of Science in Microbiology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

